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THE
SHORTYS'
Christmas



AND



NEW
YEAR
AT
HOME.

By PETER PAD.

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THE SHORTYS'

Christmas and New Year's at Home

By PETER PAD.

Author of "Bob Rollick, the Yankee Notion Drummer," "The Shortys Married and Settled Down," "Ebenezer Crow," "Stump; or, Little, but Oh, My!" "Chips and Chin-Chin," "Stuttering Sam," "Tommy Bounce," "Tom, Dick, and the _____," "Shorty; or, Kicked into Good Luck," "Tommy Dodd," "Shorty in Search of His Dad," "Tumbling Tim," "The Shortys' Trip Around the World," "Bob Rollick; or, What Was He Born For?" Etc., Etc., Etc.

EVERY one of the one hundred and fifty thousand bright, cheerful, fun-loving readers of THE BOYS OF NEW YORK knows that the Shortys are abroad, completing their tour around the world, consequently they could not possibly be "at home" just now.

But they were in New York last year during the holidays, and it is of those holiday experiences that I am about to write.

This, of course, was before they had ever thought of the wild and prolonged racket of going around the world, but they were nevertheless in for all sorts of fun, as usual, and on the approach of the holidays they began to cast about to see what they should do for amusement.

When in town their home is at one of the most aristocratic hotels, for, as Shorty says, "We've got der money an' marbles an' chalk ter make a ring," this being his way of saying that they were well fixed, and could afford to play a game of marbles with anybody.

They had returned from Tony Pastor's one evening about the middle of December, and were seated in their parlor, smoking and talking about the various merits of the performance, to which Shorty and the Kid once belonged, and in which they still had a great interest, when something was said about what Tony was going to do during the holidays.

"Now, say, dat puts me in mind—what are we hamfathers goin' ter do durin' dat same time?" said Shorty.

"Dat's so," chipped in the Kid; "le's buy a dog."

"Or a tame mouse."

This set the old man to laughing, and he shook the cigar he was smoking from the holder, and it dropped on the back of his hand, burning him severely.

Then he stopped laughing, and kicked over a table and threw a chair across the room.

And this set Shorty and the Kid to roaring.

"Confound you and your holidays."

"What's der matter wid der holidays, dad? They haven't got here yet," said Shorty.

"Oh, confound it, how it smarts," and he danced around the room, alternately blowing and trying to kiss away the trouble.

"Give der holidays a chance, pop," said the Kid, as he and Shorty lifted up the table.

"If it hadn't been for your confounded senseless jokes about them, I shouldn't have burned me."

"Why, it's der bad old jokes dat you're mad at, not der holidays," and Shorty and the Kid laughed merrily.

"Oh, confound you; shut up and go to bed."

"Nixy."

"None in my little bed just yet, dad. We're havin' too much fun here."

"Well, you will have no more fun at my expense, and don't you forget it," he growled.

"Oh, dat's all right; I never see anybody go off der nut quick as yer do, dad."

"Well, isn't it enough?"

"No; der father of a family hadn't oughter go off der nut an' talk dat way afore his little children if he burns his whole hand off," said Shorty,

"Oh, you be hanged!"

"Aren't I hung already? Aren't I got you on my hands?"

"And haven't I got a burn on my hands?" asked the old man, and as it had got over its worst smarting by that time, he began to smile, and the trouble was soon over with.

"All right, now let's get back ter biz again."

"What business?"

"Why, what are we goin' ter do in der holidays?"

"I know what grandpop's goin' ter do."

"You do?"

"Cert."

"Well, you know more than I do, then."

"What do yer think he's goin' ter do?" Shorty asked.

"Why, he's goin' ter make his children Christmas and New Year presents."

"Of course he is. Why, Kiddy, dat's understood ter begin with. I tumble dat he's goin' ter do der real purty dis year."

"Course he will. At all events I's goin' ter elevate my little sock," said the Kid.

"An' up goes my little pedal holders!"

"That's right, hang 'em up," mused the old man.

Shorty and the Kid exchanged winks.

"I like to see children hang up their stockings. It is a beautiful sight. And after they have gone to sleep to see old Santa Claus come stealing down the chimney and fill them full of taffy and toys. Oh, it's a beautiful sight."

"Yer right, dad, an' we're goin' ter hang 'em up an' watch when old Santa comes, an' den go fer him!"

"Go for him?"

"Cert. Go for him an' get everything away from him, fill our socks and fire him out."

The old man reflected a moment and then winked to himself, for he thought of something.

"Yes, knock der ole duffer out and get away wid his stock of goods."

"Oh, you will, eh?" thought the old man.

"Waal, dat's settled. We hang up our socks an go for ole Santa. Now I'll tell yer what I's goin' ter do for New Year's" said Shorty, lighting a fresh cigar and tossing his legs upon the arm of his chair.

"Shout," chipped in the Kid.

"What is it?" asked the old man.

"Goin' ter keep open house."

"Keep what?"

"Open shebang. Receive calls. Swallow tail. Do der high toned. Swell biz on der half shell."

"Good enough!" exclaimed the old man.

"Good racket," replied the Kid.

"Let's all chip in together."

"All right. Shake!" and all three of them shook hands earnestly.

Thus matters were arranged for New Year's, but nothing definite yet for Christmas.

Shorty took a pencil and wrote down about fifty names of actors and showmen to whom they would send invitations, and before they went to bed, the whole business had been arranged for New Year's; but, as before stated, nothing had been definitely agreed upon for Christmas.

But, be it understood the old man was something of a joker himself and he had an idea of what he intended to do on Christmas.

He felt certain that he could work a racket on the two boys that would just make them squeal.

And after retiring for the night, he thought it over, and laughed to himself, until he made the bed squeak.

During the next few days but little was said or done by either of them, although the old man continued to think over his racket and to laugh to himself about it.

And when Shorty and the Kid referred to the Christmas part of the business, they came to the conclusion that the old man intended to make them both presents, and so they resolved to humor him by hanging up their stockings.

"An' le's make his nibs a present," said the Kid, after the other thing had been agreed upon.

"Good throw! What shall it be?"

"Le's give him a nice gold-headed cane?"

"Yes; he bust his other one hittin' a dog fight. An' le's give him somethin' else, somethin' dat's got a snap in it?"

"A pistol?"

"No; somethin' like a fish horn or a coffee mill," mused Shorty.

"How would a coal scuttle do?"

"Bully! Good Chuck! We'll give him a cane an' a painted coal scuttle."

"Yes, an' I bet he'll open a bottle on it."

"He'll have ter put up a basket if he don't keep the presents we make him."

"Cert."

"Make solid with him dat it's der custom."

"How?"

"Tell him dat it's der racket nowadays ter fine a man a basket of wine if he gives away or sells a Christmas present."

"All right."

The next day the Kid gave it to the old man that this was the recognized custom, and believing it to be so, he thought of an addition to his own joke, and again winked slyly to himself.

"Oh, ho! that is the custom here, is it? I am glad he told me. I'll make them sicker than they ever dared to be before. I'll buy Shorty a bass drum, and the Kid a big bass viol. Oh! perhaps they won't want to put up a basket of wine to get rid of these," and the old man laughed heartily to himself.

Well, Christmas was near at hand, and the young fellows noticed that the old man was away by himself a great deal; and understood that he was shopping for presents for them, as they were for presents for him.

Both sides were keeping remarkably quiet, although Shorty was completing arrangements for his grand New Year's spread, and as this was to be a high-toned affair, of course full dressed suits had to be ordered for all three of them.

This being the first time that the old man had ever taken part in festivities of this kind, Shorty resolved that his dad, so well known by reputation among the people who would be likely to call upon them, should appear at his best.

But so far as Christmas was concerned, they only thought that he was interested in purchasing presents for them, and so made no particular arrangements for the day beyond what had already been agreed upon.

And three happier men than the Shortys were it would be hard to find. So happy, in fact, that Shorty almost forgot to play practical jokes, only he and the Kid laughed together over the coal scuttle racket and the basket of wine forfeit in case a Christmas present was given away or sold, never suspecting for a moment that the old man had one that would knock the spots out of it.

Christmas was so near at hand that everybody was happy. Even Chatham street smiled. (Price ten cents—two for fifteen.)

Come to think of it, there is something about Christmas that makes the whole world smile, for those who do not smile for the same reason that we do, smile because they think they know of something better.

But the greatest smilers among us are the servants, especially servant girls. They begin at least a month ahead of Christmas to behave themselves. At all events, that is the first change you notice in them, and from this they begin to smile and become interested in your every want. A week before Christmas they become actually solicitous regarding your health and comfort.

Now and then one of them will be forward enough to volunteer a hope that you will have a splendid time during the holidays, and occasionally one will let fall a sigh and wish that Heaven had given them something to be happy and merry for on Christmas.

Of course there are others who have the cheek to come plumply out and ask you what you are going to give them for their Christmas, but usually this is a "give away." You have probably allowed the servant to become too familiar with you.

But to return to the Shortys.

Their rooms at the hotel were taken care of by a buxom old Irish woman, by the name of Biddy McGlory.

She attended strictly to business; was always civil and obliging; always humming the same Irish jig as she worked away, only relinquishing it long enough to answer questions, or to say "thank ye" if someone staked her a quarter.

Shorty had noticed this musical peculiarity of Biddy's, and had caught the tune of it.

So he resolved to have some fun one morning, a few days before Christmas, when he knew she would be feeling most amiable.

She was doing up the work in their rooms, and as the weather was disagreeable out, all three of the Shortys were lounging about in their parlor, the old man, with a grin on his mug, still thinking of the snap he had in store.

"Hum-ti-tum-tum," was all that could be heard as Biddy proceeded with her work.

Shorty had his banjo all tuned, and snatching it as she approached with her duster, he caught the air of the jig she was humming so industriously and rang it out on the instrument as only he could do it.

Biddy started and struck an attitude.

She listened, and very soon her face began to expand into a grin.

"Oh! Moses!" was her first exclamation.

Shorty winked at her.

"Whoop! ther 'Donnybrook Fair' it is."

He gave her another wink.

"Och, murther! but I'd loike to fut it down upon the flure," said she, hardly able to contain herself.

"Why don't yer?"

"Och, sure, yer a noice little man, but yer wouldn't be afther givin' me lave to do that?"

"Yes, I will. Go ahead."

"Is that so?"

"Cert. Skip in."

"Whoop!" she cried, and catching up her dress so as to give her brogues full play, she began to "fut it" in the wildest manner.

It was fun for all of them, and, if possible, Biddy appeared to enjoy it the most. She put in all the fancy steps that ever Kitty O'Neil showed her graceful figure in, although, of course, they were far less graceful and artistic.

Oh, it was lots of fun, and she was just knocking the carpet all to pieces!

But finally she seemed to become lonesome, even with the notes of her favorite jig thrilling her very marrow. She wanted company in her dance.

There was nothing mean about her and she wanted to share the fun with somebody.

That somebody was close at hand, for the old man had become warmed up by the clanging melody of the banjo, and the hearty way in which Biddy was putting down what, in his younger days, was his favorite joy, that he could stand it no longer.

"For the love av Moses! won't somebody give me aze?" she cried.

"What's der trub?" asked the Kid.

"Won't lave me a chance at 'em?"

"Want ter flight?"

"Foight ther devil? Noa! dance-jig!" isn't nobody gud for me? Whoop!" and she put it down even stronger than ever.

"Yes, Biddy, I'll give you a turn," said the old man, leaping to his feet.

"Come an, thin."

And he just did "come an, thin," and the fat, stubby old fellow showed in half of no time that he was no slouch, and had in his younger days most likely been a red hot jig dancer.

"Good, Mick!" cried the Kid.

"Go it, dad!" said Shorty, giving the jig new life on the banjo.

"Say, how's this—'Der New Shorty Combination,' eh."

They both laughed, but meanwhile Biddy and the old man were going it high.

"Whoop!" she would cry, now and then. "Der yer think a fat duck loike yees can give me all I want av this?"

"Go it, Biddy. I'll try," said the old man.

And try he did, but just as he was putting in his best licks, the parlor door opened, and in strode the housekeeper—stern and savage.

She had been ringing for Biddy in vain, and finally going in search of her, found her as just related.

Biddy caught sight of her, and it instantly took all the dance out of her legs.

The old man caught sight of her, and dodged into his bedroom out of sight, while Shorty and the Kid laughed immoderately.

"Mrs. McGlory, how dare you?" cried the housekeeper.

"Fakes, ma'am, I begs yer pardon."

"How dare you beg my pardon?"

"Sure, because I couldn't help it when I hearn the music, so I couldn't."

"Very well, if you are so susceptible of music as all this comes to, we can get along without you. You will leave at the end of the month. Go to No. 70 and do up the work."

"Yes, ma'am," and very crestfallen, poor Biddy obeyed orders, and the Shortys were left alone.

"Dat's too bad," remarked the Kid.

"Cert. Dad, don't yer see it?"

"What?" asked the old man, coming out of his bedroom.

"Ye've ruined poor Bid."

"How?"

"She's been bounced for bein' found dancin' wid you. Yer a nice ole parent, you are—nice man to bring up ten-

der chickens like us; bah!" and so they rigged him for a long while.

"Oh, I'll see the landlord presently and fix that all right. She sha'n't be bounced," said he, after listening to them for awhile.

And he was as good as his word, for he did fix things all right, and Biddy was restored to her position, besides being promised a Christmas present by Shorty and the Kid.

This, of course, made her feel happy, and at the old man's suggestion the boys were to see to buying her the present.

And what do you think they bought her?

While I am on this part of the subject I may as well tell you.

They didn't mind the expense.

In the first place they bought her a large shawl pin, made to resemble a washboard, and flashy enough to catch the eye of a coon. Next a huge Webster's Unabridged Dictionary; a baby's high chair; five pounds of molasses candy and two pounds of cough drops. These they had put into a box and sent them to her at the hotel, where the presentation was made the night before Christmas.

A happier creature than she was it would have been impossible to find, for she evidently never stopped to think what she was going to do with the articles, not being able to read or in want of a baby chair.

But she took them all the same and came out in flying colors with her shawl pin the very next day.

Let us return to our muttons.

Shorty and the Kid had their presents all in place for the old man, and those which he intended to make them were already at the hotel, waiting for the young fellows to go to bed before they should be taken into their room where they slept together.

The old fellow in the meantime was keeping out of sight, waiting for them to get out of the way so that he could carry out the programme of his racket that he had laughed so much about himself.

They knew he was anxious for them to go to bed, and about twelve o'clock, being sleepy, they did so, after hanging up their stockings.

It must be understood that Shorty and the Kid occupied one chamber and the old man another, both leading from their parlor, so just as soon as he found they had retired for the night, he began his preparations.

The bass drum and bull fiddle were stealthily taken up into the parlor, together with two of the largest rocking-horses he could buy, and these were arranged in such a way that their eyes would fall on them the first thing when they came out of their room in the morning, each present having the name of the one to receive it fastened to it on a tag.

This part of the business tickled him almost to death, especially when he thought how each of them would have to pay for a basket of wine if they either sold or gave them away.

But this was only a portion of the game he had undertaken.

Hurrying to his own chamber, he at once proceeded to dress himself up as Santa Claus, having hired such a costume for the purpose; and a remarkably good-looking old

god of Christmas he made, for he had just about the build that we generally assign to the old myth.

He had to look himself over for a long time before he could stop laughing and get down sober enough to trust himself to carry out the business he had in hand.

But he finally succeeded in doing so; then taking a tin pan, in which was a chemical known as "red fire," and which every boy has probably seen on the Fourth of July, if no other time, he started for the room of his son and grandson.

By this time they were both asleep, and opening their door did not arouse them. Each one was playing on his little Christmas bugle.

Stationing himself in front of the fireplace, he proceeded to light the chemical in the pan, and in an instant the room was ablaze with a flame of blood-red fire.

"Halloo!" he called; and both Shorty and the Kid sat up and looked at the strange apparition.

"What is it?" asked the Kid, who, for an instant, was bewildered.

"It's some bloomin' ole Santa Claus!" said Shorty, tumbling to the old man's racket right away.

"What der yer want here?"

"I come to fill your stockings, knowing that you have been good little boys, and have not forgotten your old father," said the Santa Claus.

"Let's go for him," whispered the kid.

"I soy, is dad really a good man, Santa?" asked Shorty.

"One of the finest in the world."

"I guess yer don't know him, boss."

"I know him well, and have known him long. You must always be good boys, and never play tricks on him."

"Soy, what have yer put in our socks?"

"Nothing as yet," said the old man.

"Nothin'!" they both exclaimed.

"Not as yet; but you must not be impatient. Go to sleep, and be good little boys, and I will not forget you," saying which he started to go.

"Soy, ole Santa, why don't yer go up der chim?"

"Up what?"

"Up der flue."

"You must not ask impertinent questions. Be good boys, and I will fill your stockings before morning, never fear."

By this time the red light began to grow dim.

"Soy, yer a snide Santa Claus!" said Shorty.

"What!"

"Yes, yer a duffer!"

Saying which, they leaped out of bed, and went for him.

Shorty grabbed him by the false wig, and off it came, at the same time giving him a dig in the eye that keeled him over upon the floor, while the Kid banged him on the nose, and jumped all over the unfortunate Santa.

"Hi! hold on! Boys—boys, don't you know me?" roared the old man.

"Yes, yer a duffer! Give him some more of it, Kiddy!" replied Shorty.

"Stop, I tell you! it's only a joke!"

"Joke, hey? Playin' der red fire big for a joke, hey?"

"Yes—yes! Stop; I tell you! it's me!" he cried, as they renewed the attack.

"Who's me?"

"Why, your father."

"Git out, yer ole duffer," replied Shorty, pretending not to recognize him. "My dad wouldn't play such a sick joke as this."

"An' didn't yer just say dat he was one of der finest in der land?" demanded the Kid.

"Yes—yes, but that was only a joke," he protested, struggling lamely to his feet.

"Why, Kiddy, 'tis dad!" said Shorty, affecting great surprise.

"Nix; git yer pop an' shoot him," the Kid replied, keeping up the racket.

"No—No! Confound you, don't you know me? Come out into the parlor," he said, for the red fire had vanished and they had only the light in the room which came in from the parlor.

They followed him, and there beheld the worst broken up Santa Clause that ever entered the business. His joke, or, at least this sensational part of it had turned out a complete fizzle, and the old man felt sick enough to take medicine.

And how they did laugh at and guy him as he stood there. It was Christmas morning then.

"Wish yer merry Christmas, dad."

"Merry Christmas, grandpop."

"Oh, go to thunder! You knew well enough it was me."

"Git out. How could we tell? Why didn't yer say so first off? We thort yer was a burglar."

"A very likely story."

"Cert. But it's all right now. Merry Christmas ter yer," said Shorty.

"Yes. What yer goin' ter give us?"

At this the old man smiled, for as yet they had not discovered his presents.

"Oh, I have got you on presents. Here," he said, pointing to the instruments and rocking-horses.

They at once went to inspect them with huge grins upon their mugs.

"You know what you told me about the selling or giving away of a holiday present?"

They nudged each other and laughed. The old man had got the best of them after all. He had doubled discounted their coal-scuttle snap, and they hadn't a word to say.

"Good racket, dad. Many thanks. They're just what we wanted; just what we were pining for. But we haven't forgotten you, though," said Shorty went to his room and returned with the coal-scuttle and cane.

The old man tumbled to the snap at once. He understood now why they wished to impress it upon his mind that it was against the custom to give away or sell holiday presents. They wanted him to keep that scuttle.

"Here yer are, dad. Long's it's Christmas we may as well finish up the biz of givin' presents. There's a cane—a boss cane for der boss ole man. Long may yer wear it."

"There's where ther red fire oughter come in," remarked the Kid.

The old man was smiling all over.

"And here is a little memento which yer can wear on yer watch chain."

"Hi—hi! Long may he wear it!" exclaimed the Kid jumping upon a chair, and from it astride of his rocking-horse.

The old man was proud and confused. The Santa Claus mishap was all forgotten.

"Boys I thank you!"

"When this you see, remember me."

"I shall do so. I shall keep these beautiful articles so long as I live; and I expect you will do the same by these presents I give you."

"Oh, cert; shake!" and the laughing trio shook hands and wished each other a merry Christmas.

It was nearly three o'clock in the morning before they got over this festival of laughing, and before it was over with, the old man gave them each a fine diamond ring which he had brought them.

But finally they all went to bed and to sleep, fully satisfied with the racket.

Early the next day, however, Shorty and the Kid were awake betimes, and took a look at their big musical instruments and rocking horses.

The old man was sleeping soundly, and they softly carried the drum and fiddle into his chamber, and there began to saw upon one and pound upon the other.

This created noise enough of course, to awaken the dead, to say nothing of a sleeper, and the terrible discordance aroused the old man, who for a moment imagined that he was in the infernal regions.

Shorty sawed upon the bass viol, and the Kid pounded the drum.

"Hold on, for Heaven's sake, hold!" roared the old man, the instant he regained his senses and saw what was going on.

"Nixy; we're goin' ter serenade yer, dad."

"Yes; Christmas serenade."

"This is the way good parents let their kids rout them out Christmas mornings."

The old man poked his fingers in his ears, and cried murder. In fact the whole hotel was startled and aroused by the noise.

"Stop it, I tell you!"

"We'll stop it on one condish."

"Name it?"

"Take back yer fiddle and drum."

"I'll do it."

"An' yer rockin' hosses."

"Yes—yes, anything. Stop it!"

"All right, dat settles it, and if yer don't, we'll serenade yer every day," and they stopped.

"All right, if you let up on the coal-scuttle," said the old man.

The instruments were removed to the parlor, and Shorty and the Kid went out for a drive, leaving the victim to himself.

His reflections were somewhat mixed, but they were not entirely so pleasant as they might have been. He couldn't compose himself to sleep again, and so was obliged to think.

"Confound those little rascals! they have got the best of me after all. Yes, after all I have expended on that joke, they have knocked it squarely on the head. Besides,

got a black eye playing Santa Claus. There was another joke spoiled. So here I am, after all, with that make-up to pay for, and those instruments on my hands to dispose of. Hang me if I ever attempt to play a joke upon them again!"

Well, that was about the size of it all around. The old man was the victim, and Shorty got out of it all right, as usual. He was certainly born under a lucky star.

They spent the day pleasantly, however, and had lots of fun, and notwithstanding the old man's misfortune, he recovered his spirits before night, and joined them and their friends in the laugh at his expense.

New Year's day was the next thing in order. The old man managed to get his "presents" off his hands without any great loss, and the parlor was put in order for the grand New Year's reception, the invitation cards to which read as follows:

1879. HAPPY NEW YEAR.
THE SHORTYS
AT HOME.

Drop in and take a look at us.

The old year of 1878 finally wore itself out, and the happy new one came in all smiles and good looks.

There is probably no place in the world where New Year's is celebrated to such a festive degree as it is in the City of New York. The social mercury goes away up on this occasion, and everybody that is not jolly proceeds at once to get so.

The ladies and some bachelors received their friends and exchange the compliments of the season, after which they say things about the weather and take a drink of something to keep out the cold.

So it can readily be understood that where a gentleman makes from ten to fifty calls during the day, that they get to be somewhat exhilarated before getting home.

Some of them do not even succeed in getting home at all until the next day, and some of the funniest and most absurd sights are seen that ever a man laughed at.

But our dealings on this occasion are with the Shortys, so let us return to them.

As before stated, their parlor had been trimmed and ornamented in a most tasty and expensive manner, while at one side there stood a table that was literally loaded down with everything that the market afforded.

Shorty, the Kid, and the old man were each of them dressed in swallow-tail coats and looked their very nobbiest, while their feelings were correspondingly high.

The writer of this, their biographer and long time friend, received an invitation to call, and resolved on making it the first on his list, that he might see them at their best.

I accordingly put in an appearance at their hotel at about ten o'clock A.M., dressed to mash. A servant showed me to their parlor, announcing, as he opened the door:

"Mr. F'er Pad!"

I heard a whoop in response.

There stood my little friends, Shorty on one side and the Kid on the other side of the old man.

Their swell was simply immense.

"Happy New Year ter yer, Pete," said Shorty, and the others repeated it.

"The same to you, my friends, and many happy returns,"

I said in reply, as I stooped to take each of them by the hand.

"Mr. Pad, I am delighted to see you looking so well," said Mr. Burwick, taking my hand for another shake.

"Thanks, and I am glad to see you looking so well on this occasion."

"Peter, ole man, it's good for sore eyes ter see yer. Brigates all der vile?" said Shorty.

"Oh, I've been first-rate, thank you; how have you been yourself?"

"Like a game bantam all der time. How's everybody dat yer know?"

"Everything and everybody is first-rate."

"How's dat charcoal mark?"

"Charcoal mark! What's that?" I asked, not catching the drift of his humor.

"Why, dat long, skinny young rooster with their big ears; der boss liar dat's all der time writin' 'bout Peter Pad's farm."

"Oh, you mean our 'Ed?'"

"Yes, dat's der fish pole."

"Oh, he's still able to write," said I laughing.

"Dat's too bad," he sighed.

"Do you think so?"

"Cert. Pity some Sunday School wouldn't undertake to reform him. But I s'pose dey don't dare ter undertake der job for fear of failin'."

"Well, it certainly would be a risky undertaking for one school to grapple with. How is the little Kid?" I asked, turning to the youngest Shorty and turning the subject at the same time.

"Ise fust chop off der sirloin, Peter."

"Sirloin!" sneered Shorty. "Fust chop off behind der horns more like."

The laugh from this changed the subject again, and then they told me about the Christmas racket, and we laughed over it for some time.

"Now, Peter, ole man, come an' 'stonish yer belly with some 'gold seal,' right off der ice," said Shorty.

I think I winked at him. At all events, the servant soon had the cork out of a bottle, and was filling up the glasses.

We lifted them together, that is to say, each one lifted his own.

"Peter, give us a toast," said Shorty.

"Well, here's to small men with large hearts, and may all good men live to see many happy returns of this festive occasion!"

"Good enough ter eat, let 'lone drinkin'," replied Shorty, as he proceeded to quaff the effervescent wine.

It was too early in the day to eat anything yet, but Shorty insisted on my sampling every thing he had on his table, and I tried to do so.

But this sampling process was not half over when the door opened, and the servant announced:

"Mr. Tony Pastor and Gus Williams."

Here were more old friends, and the process of handshaking and the exchange of seasonable complements was indulged in.

"Why, you are looking as fine as silk here, Shorty," said Tony.

"Oh, I'se tryin' ter do der puty. How do you like it?"

"Never saw a finer spread in my life."

"Where did you get it, Shortness?" asked Gus Williams. He always called him Shortness.

"Picked it up—on de banjo."

"Harry and John Kernel," said the servant, again announcing visitors.

Here were more hand-shaking and more "Happy New Years" exchanged, and then another report was heard from the neck of a bottle.

Then Billy Barry was introduced and "shook," but they didn't have to drag him up to the table where the wine was, as they did the rest of us.

Ad Ryman came in and Shorty rushed for a stepladder, in order to shake hands with him.

Quips and puns and quirks flew about in a most lively manner, Shorty holding his own with the best of them.

Finally Harry Kennedy, the ventriloquist, was ushered in.

"Ah! here comes 'a flower from my angel mother's grave,'" said Gus Williams, and all hands had to laugh, knowing Harry to be the author of that much sung song.

"The 'German Senator' has the floor," said Harry, cheerfully.

"But that isn't the only thing he has had."

"Well, it's all I have had," said he, looking over to the table wishfully, for Harry is a good feeder.

But he didn't have to wait long before his hash-mill was working upon something, and once more a flow of wine, wit, and humor enlivened the occasion. For an hour or more we all remained in Shorty's parlor, enjoying ourselves hugely; but as we had many other calls to make we gradually drifted away and left our little host to receive the many others who were calling.

Before leaving, however, I promised him that I would call on him in the evening again and see how he had got along, and at nearly midnight I did so and found the room full, even then, of actors, showmen, newspaper men, and all sorts of good fellows who were numbered among his friends.

And by this time they were all feeling in fine spirits—being pretty full of them—and songs were being sung, stories told, and everything that denoted happy hearts and jovial reunions was being indulged in.

Shorty had received so many during the day that he was feeling very mellow, as was the Kid, but the old man had been knocked out some time before, and had retired to bed with his boots and swallow-tail on.

"Has it been a success, Shorty?" I asked.

"Has it! Peter, I never know I had so many friends in the world, and I don't think I should have had but for you, so let us have a parting glass here. Here's ter you an' I—de long an' de short of it!" said he, and we drank the wine and toast.

And thus wound up SHORTY'S CHRISTMAS AND NEW YEAR AT HOME.

MULLIN'S RIDE.

BY L'HOMME QUI RIT.

MULLIN's journey lay across town, so lounging under the

friendly shade of a corner grocer's awning he awaited the arrival of a bobtailed car.

He was a bachelor, beau and blonde of thirty odd potato-bug seasons, with a short, stumpy figure, cloudy-gray eyes, hair artistically half-mooned on his forehead and stunningly arrayed in good clothes, self-conceit and cheap jewelry.

"Hold on there!" he shouted, making frantic signals for a halt, as a car finally hove in sight; but no punch manipulator at its tail, with arm uplifted like Joshua commanding the sun to stand still, answered his signal, and the bandit in the bow, who struggled with the limping propelling power, was engaged at that moment in freckling the street with tobacco-juice and flirting with a servant-girl who was washing some second-story windows.

Drawing a long breath, and jamming his hat on as tightly as a hoop on a barrel, Mullin gave chase, and after dodging a baby carriage, being sprinkled by a watercart, skating off on a banana skin, and running over an ash-barrel and a small child, he succeeded in overtaking and establishing a foothold on a tobacco-sprinkled step.

He found the seats all occupied, and scarcely room between the row of passengers' knees to admit of a walking-cane standing on tiptoes, let alone a human being. Edging himself in he was clutching for a strap, when the car lurched and deposited him on an elderly gentleman's lap, who, after shoving him off, remarked, angrily:

"Why in the deuce can't you look where you're going!"

"How could I help it?" he retorted, plucking an old lady's bonnet nearly off as the car gave another pitch.

"Gracious, man alive! see what you're doing," cried the old lady, glaring at him viciously.

"Very sorry ma'am. Excuse me," he apologized, grabbing a strap and swaying to and fro like a weeping willow in a gale of wind.

He had just finished dancing a clog hornpipe on his heels, and was pirouetting on his toes, when some suggestive glances from the driver reminded him that he had not deposited his fare; so hanging on by one hand like the gymnasts in the circus, he groped in his pockets for a nickel, and wiggling towards a little glass coffin with a post-office mouth, dropped into it, without looking, a suspender button.

"Here, none of that kind of work!" exclaimed the bandit driver, throwing open the door and pointing to the button in the treasure-box.

Mullin grew red and uncomfortable all over, as the passengers regarded him over the tops of their papers with suspicion, while two merry, dark-eyed gazelles in the corner, upon whom he was anxious to make a favorable impression, tittered audibly. Dangling first by an old man's bald head, and finally grabbing the strap, Mullin paid another flying visit to his pocket, and succeeded in fishing up and spreading out on the floor of the car and in the laps of the passengers a fine-tooth comb, a suspender buckle, some orange peel, half-a-dozen tooth-picks, and a rubber sleeve-band, which looked suspiciously like a lady's garter.

Mullin felt that "his goose was cooked," as far as the laughing gazelles went, and after dropping the cursed hide-and-go-seek coin in the urn, he turned away and tried to seem as if the articles he had scattered around did not belong to him.

"Here's something you dropped," said the old gentleman into whose lap he had been thrown, handing him his fine-tooth comb.

Mullin grew red in the face and profane in thought, thrust the comb down into his pocket, and fell to studying the rules of the company posted overhead as attentively as if he contemplated a lawsuit against them and desired to find a weak clause.

"And I guess this belongs to your wife, sir," croaked the bald-headed man, prodding him in the ribs with his umbrella and holding up the elastic sleeve-band.

Everybody laughed, and Mullin hadn't felt so hot and badly since he upset a beehive last summer. He was registering a solemn vow in reference to future voyages in one-horse cars when an old lady entered and tendered him a two-dollar bill to get changed and pay her fare with.

This necessitated Mullin performing another tortuous pilgrimage to the front of the car to exchange the clean-faced bill for half a pound of pennies, nickels and some greasy, beery, disreputable relics of fractional currency. In returning with his change he accidentally stepped on the old gentleman's pet corn, and the aged victim having pushed and thumped him around to his heart's content, exclaimed :

"Darnation, stupid! what ails your big feet?"

Mullin was getting mad and reckless about this time, and squatted to hunt up some of the nickels he had dropped; after a moment's search he discovered them near where one of the gazelles' striped Balbriggans was planted. Growing desperate, he made a frantic effort to kick them up from between the slats with which the infernal machine was paved, scooped the nail off one finger, jammed a splinter through his thumb, and the car turning a curve, he lost his balance, and shot head first in among the striped stockings.

"Ouch! Ow! Oh, dear!" screamed the gazelles, bouncing up and gathering their skirts tight around their foot-handles.

"Ex—excuse m—e, m—miss," spluttered Mullin, trying to get up, and when about straightening himself, a fresh lurch flops him over again, peels a few inches of skin off his nose, rips his coat, bites his tongue through, and scrapes the floor clean with his chin.

"Why doesn't some one kick the awkward clown out?" asked a voice near the door.

When Mullen arose he requested an introduction to the oyster that made that remark, till he opened him on a half shell. Not receiving it, he took a flying leap out of the car and made for the nearest drug store, where he informed the clerk who sold him the sticking-plaster that he had just ridden fifty untamed mustangs.

—o—

A PICNIC ON ME.

By L'HOMME QUI RIT.

I WENT out to take a walk and a beer the other morning, as is my wont.

Meandering down town I got as far as the post-office, and didn't know what to do to kill time.

There was not a matinee that day; not even a boxing exhibition at Harry Hill's.

Says I to myself, "What's to be done?"

I gave it up as a conundrum.

Then I went over to Tom Reeves'.

There was a crowd there looking at the billiard players.

I joined the group, and was soon interested, when some one tapped me on the shoulder.

I looked around confidently, as I didn't believe it was a detective or the sheriff.

I was right, it was neither.

It was Simpson, not three-balled Simpson, but Sam Simpson.

He was radiant with smiles and Sunday clothes.

"What's up?" I asked.

"Nothin' much," he replied.

I couldn't make out what he was driving at.

Finally he drew me off to a quiet corner. He seemed as if he was about divulging some terrible, blood-curdling secret.

Then he said :

"Got anything to do to to-day?"

"Nothing," I replied; "why?"

"There's going to be a big strawberry festival to-day. It's going to be immense—all the lemonade you can drink, and a big graft."

"Have we time to catch the boat?"

"Plenty," said he; "and I've got tickets."

"All right, I'm your oyster."

Then we strolled away in search of the picnickers.

On the way he requested me not to say anything about it around amongst his friends; that he had told at his place of business that his mother was dead, and he wanted to get off to go to the funeral.

"You didn't give them that, did you?"

"Why, of course; what's the matter with that excuse?" he said, somewhat flurried.

"Nothing, except that it is old enough to be Noah's grandfather."

We caught the boat and were soon drinking in the divine melody of the "Mulligan Guards."

Simpson saw a girl that took his eye. He looked at her a few times.

And she looked back.

He was dead mashed.

He thought he'd ask her to dance the next set with him. And he did.

While they were dancing another fellow came up to me, and said he:

"Who's that snoozer what's dancin' wid dat gal in de blue dress?"

"That's Simpson," I replied, with the belief that that faithful chum of mine would immediately be ground up into hash.

"Well, dat's my gal!" exclaimed the fellow.

I sighed.

"Wait till yer see me kick der gizzard out of dat bloat," said the tough.

"Don't, my friend," I interposed; "he's a peaceable married man seeking innocent pleasure. that's all."

"What d'ye say?"

I repeated what I had just said.

"Oh, won't I kick him apart when I gets rested a little."

"No, don't," I protested; "come and take a beer."

He seemed to change.

His eyes sparkled and he smiled.

"Let's go for the beer," he said.

And we went for it.

After he had deposited it, he said one glass only made him wild, and probably if he got on deck he might kill Simpson.

"What shall I do?" I soliloquized.

He overheard me.

Looking into my face, he said:

"If you want to save your friend's life, there is but one way."

"What is it?" I asked, excitedly.

"Fill me till I'm helpless!"

I considered Simpson's life and the tough's proposition. There was no alternative.

I determined to fill him.

"Set them up," said I to the bartender.

And they were duly set up.

I soon had the fellow helpless and went to look for Simpson.

I soon found him.

Found him pouring soft words into the auricular of the fair one with whom he had been dancing.

"Says I, "Simpson, hide away if you value your life."

"What's the matter?" said he.

I related.

Alas! my peace of mind is gone.

Every one gives me a laugh when they meet me on the street.

Heartless world.

The fellow that threatened Simpson's life worked in the same store with him, and played the trick to get full at my expense.

The rest of the picnic I didn't enjoy.

It was a picnic for Simpson—a picnic on me.

I got home late that night, all covered with dust and half starved to death.

All I got was a couple of strawberries and a mug of Sunday-school lemonade—almost unconscious of lemon.

I have sworn off on such things as a recreation, and never intend to go on another picnic if I can help it.

—o—

BARLOW'S PICCADILLY.

BY L'HOMME QUI RIT.

BARLOW laid in some new collars recently. Regular stand up song-and-dance collars. He bought them to use on special occasions. When he gets one of those linen fences around his neck, he looks absolutely tough and nifty.

He came around to see me the other afternoon. He ~~had~~ on one of those infernal collars.

It stood right up to within a couple of inches of his ha~~ess~~ Said I, playfully, after he had seated himself:

"Most noble Tobias, how much do you charge a line?" He didn't seem to comprehend my meaning.

He looked at me in blank astonishment, and said:

"How much a line for what?"

"Why, for advertising, of course."

"Advertising!" said he; "why, what do you mean?"

"What I mean," I said, "is this: How much do you charge a square inch for advertising on that collar, eh?"

He didn't reply.

He merely smiled a consumptive smile, and lighted a cigarette.

After a moment, he murmured, in an audible whisper:

"Will thou indulge in one of those things called a promenade, with a racket at the end?"

"A which?" said I.

He repeated the proposition.

"Are there any billiards to be included in this little racket?"

"There are," said Barlow, a smile of prospective happiness diffusing itself over his exquisite mug.

"And beer?"

"Yes, by the schooner."

"And free lunch?" I continued.

"Yes, everything," he went on; "we'll have a regular bald-headed racket, and don't you forget it!"

"I'm with you," I said.

Then I got my hat and night-key, and we started off together.

It was early in the afternoon.

As soon as we got out we laid in a judicious supply of beer.

Merely as a preamble, so to speak.

Barlow was happy—happy as the traditional clam at high tide, because he had some cash in his pocket.

He raised the shekels out of his mother—that is out of her bureau drawer, while she was off at a worshiping circus.

He was just figuring on a programme for the night, when he met a crowd of bootblacks and newsboys.

They took us in immediately, and one said to the rest:

"Look at the bleed?"

Barlow didn't hear the remark.

Then he got braver, and shouted:

"Hey, cully, spike the piccadilly."

Barlow was mad.

"Hey, shoot that collar!" continued the bootblack.

"Get a derrick!" shouted another.

"Holy mackerel!" screamed Barlow; "wait till you see me bedew the lap of nature with liver and gore!"

Said I, after a moment's pause:

"Tobias, old boy, consider well what thou art about, for—"

"Oh, just give me a solid show, and I'll carve the light out of that rooster quicker than I can poultice a schooner of beer."

"Then you'd make short work of him?" I suggested.

Then he pulled out a knife, and the kids were delighted.

"Oh, talk about Whalley and your Grand Duke Theater — what d'ye say?" bawled one of the kids, lustily.

Then Barlow put up his knife.

He thought the crowd was too much for him, but he didn't admit it.

He said he didn't want to commit murder because —

"Because why?" I asked.

Why, because I am not well enough fixed to indulge in that little racket."

But after he put up his knife he determined to chase them, and started off in pursuit.

He picked out the fellow who had opened fire on him. And followed him with might and main.

Talk about your Westons, why Barlow was simply chain lightning.

So were the kids.

Tobias got excited and the perspiration streamed into his eyes, but still he kept up, determined to get hunk with that puerile wind-bag if possible.

I remained in the rear.

All great heroes do during a fight.

Then a crowd followed Barlow, and some charitable person, supposing he had been robbed, bellowed at the top of his voice:

"Hey, stop thief!"

The gang took up the cry.

The crowd was running behind Barlow, and many others followed, supposing that Tobias was the thief.

Finally the kids escaped.

Not that they were swifter than Barlow, but because a policeman suddenly put in an appearance.

And grabbed Barlow.

And murmured in dulcet tones:

"Come with me my gay and festive laddy buck — "

Barlow attempted to explain.

It was of no use, however.

I could do nothing.

If I had offered him a true history he'd have said I was giving him taffy.

Then again he might have me arrested as a pal.

So I didn't go on like a woman.

I kept my tongue still.

The fugitive kids smiled at Barlow as he was being "taken in."

Smiled long, happy smiles which must have been sweet in the eyes of the infuriated victim.

He was locked up for the night.

In the morning he was discharged.

When I met him the next day he looked as forlorn and deserted as an ice-wagon in a snowstorm.

Said he, after he had wiped the perspiration off his face:

"Life is a delusion and a snare!"

I agreed with him.

Then we went out and took a beer to brace up, and he told me he had given all his collars to a lone widow and never intended to wear a piccadilly again.

Although he is a chronic liar, I think he intended to be truthful that time.

FREE-LUNCH BILLY.

BY L'HOMME QUI RIT.

BILGER keeps a down-town soup-house.

One of those dives where you can get a plate of soup, a glass of beer and a chromo for ten cents.

Bilger is a tender-hearted man: at least he was until lately, but so many persons have taken advantage of his kindness that he has determined to be savage.

The advantage they take of him is this:

They go in and devour a square meal.

Then they say:

"Bilger, just put that down, will you? I'll settle at the end of the week."

Bilger generally complied with these requests.

He *put down* their indebtedness, and they *put down* his hash; a most equitable way of dealing.

Somehow or other these fellows didn't come down with the dust at the promised time, and Bilger registered a solemn oath to henceforth trust no one.

He was determined.

One day Free-Lunch Billy dropped in on him.

Free-Lunch Billy is a notorious character.

He is well known among the fraternity as a rank skin, a skin upon which many a credulous saloon-keeper had slipped up.

So, when Bilger saw him walk in with an angelic smile on his dial, his eyebrows dropped, and he looked like a thunderclap trying to hold itself in.

But Billy didn't care.

He only smiled more, and murmured to himself:

"I just guess I'll get a graft for nothing."

Then he went and seated himself at a table.

Soon a waiter walked up.

Said he with a smile:

"What do you want?"

And the luncher replied:

"Fetch me a bowl of soup."

The waiter waltzed joyously away, and returned with the soup.

He was just putting his spoon in it, and planning a way by which he could swindle the saloonist, when that individual walked up, and said:

"Do you know the new rules?"

"Nixy!"

"Well, all individuals who feed must pay in advance."

"Is that so?"

"Yes."

"That's a mighty good rule," continued Billy, as he dipped his spoon into the plate.

Bilger was stunned by his cheek.

As he was elevating the spoon to his mouth, Bilger put his hand on his arm, and shouted:

"Halt!"

"Oh, what's the matter with ye, anyway?"

"I want my money in advance!" screamed Bilger, fairly wild with rage.

"Well, ye can't get it in advance."

"I can't eh?"

"No, ye can't, eh?" howled Billy, derisively.

Then Bilger said not a word.

He just put his hand in his pocket and drew forth something, and before Billy was aware of it, Bilger had drawn the contents of his plate into a syringe, after which he walked triumphantly away.

The free-luncher was nonplussed.

He had seen many diabolical devices in his time, but Bilger's little game he considered preeminently the boss racket.

"Come back, old man," screamed Billy; "I'll pay you in advance."

Bilger returned, and laid his syringe on the table while he went for another bowl of soup.

After he had left, Free-Lunch Billy secreted the syringe under his coat.

Bilger returned with the soup, set it before his guest, and said:

"Ten cents, please."

"What d'ye say?" exclaimed Billy.

"Ten cents," repeated Bilger.

"Just keep off at a respectful distance, or I'll ten cents ye, ye pettifogging myrmidon!" screamed Billy, as he drew a bead on Bilger's shirt front with the soup-loaded syringe.

Bilger got off at a decent distance, and Billy supped his soup in peace.

When he was about to leave Bilger had a cop in the place; he shook hands with Billy's collar, when Billy drew forth a silver half dollar and paid his bill. Then he was released, and he went on his way with a light step, feeling happy at the manner in which he'd beaten Bilger, for he stuck him on a snide half dollar.

ROUGH ON SIMPSON.

BY L'HOMME QUI RIT.

SIMPSON went on a moonlight excursion last week.

He was togged up regardless.

Close to his side was his fair enslaver.

Also a rival, which his name was Jolly.

Jolly watched Simpson with cat-like vigilance, as he pointed out the places of interest on the moonlit Hudson.

"I'll grind that chicken-hearted fraud into hash!" soliloquized Jolly, angrily.

He'd have put his threat into execution on the spot had not Simpson started off for something to eat with the fair Amelia.

Amelia ate just one dollar's worth—principally clams and sponge cake.

Sampson paid the bill with a forced smile. That is, he laid down a two-dollar note, which was all he possessed at the time.

The caterer scrutinized the bill closely.

Simpson's heart was in his mouth.

"I guess not, young man."

"What's that?" said Simpson, blushing deeply.

"This is a bad bill, sir—queer, N. G., etc."

Amelia looked on in an embarrassed manner.

Simpson told her he'd meet her up-stairs; so she got out

of the way and left him alone to settle with the hash man.

When she got up-stairs she was accosted by Jolly, with whom she went out on deck and chatted gayly.

She cruelly told him of Simpson's predicament.

Jolly was delighted.

Finally Simpson settled with the chowder man.

He gave him a pair of gold sleeve buttons.

Then he went up on deck.

When he arrived there and saw what was going on he fairly foamed at the mouth.

"Oh, you miserable dog?" he hissed.

"What d'ye say?" laughed Jolly.

"What business have you with that girl?"

Then Amelia got mad.

Got her little back up, so to speak, and looked daggers at Simpson, who was trembling with rage.

"Hello, counterfeit!" screamed Jolly, with a chuckle.

This was more than the injured individual could bear.

His eyes flashed with indignation.

One awful moment of suspense, and he rushed toward Jolly.

When he was within a yard of him his heel came in contact with a piece of orange skin.

The result of which caused Simpson to collide with the deck.

Then Jolly and Amelia wended their way to the saloon and danced and enjoyed themselves until the boat reached the landing at which they were to get off.

When Simpson fell on the deck he did not get up for some time.

Whether he was knocked senseless by the fall or the quantity of beer he had imbibed made his return to an erect posture an insurmountable difficulty, would be a fine question to decide.

When he did get on his feet, however, he found out that the boat had stopped at all its landings, and was, now, uninhabited at its original place of lying.

When Simpson got home it was 4 A. M.

He swears most emphatically to have revenge out of Jolly at the earliest opportunity.

He, furthermore, won't recognize Amelia in the street.

But she doesn't care, as she is now being taken around by Jolly.

At last accounts arrangements were being made for a sanguinary conflict, and it is very probable that blood will yet be shed.

SIMPSON AS ROMEO.

BY L'HOMME QUI RIT.

SIMPSON, like many young men of to-day, considers himself an actor—a sort of a Montague on the half-shell, so to speak.

This idea has been running away with him for some time, and about a month ago he joined an amateur dramatic club.

Among the things offered at the last performance was the balcony scene from "Romeo and Juliet."

It was decided who should play Juliet, but the selection of Romeo seemed to bother them considerably.

Barlow was mashed on Juliet.

So was Simpson, and both wanted to perform that part.

Either one or the other of them was to be the man, and it was finally decided to let Simpson play it.

He did play it—played the deuce with it.

When Barlow heard of Simpson's luck, he got his back up and wanted satisfaction.

Said he felt like eating scrap iron and drinking chain lightning.

Simpson studied his part hard, and kept out of Barlow's way.

Which was a good thing for him, for Barlow went around looking for him, armed with a pistol and an Indian club.

Finally he came to the conclusion that Simpson was on his guard, so he devised another method for getting satisfaction.

It was a device wild and dire.

He'd get square with Simpson right in the presence of the audience.

He bided his time.

At last the night came.

The first piece was over, and the next would either make or kill Simpson.

Before he left his (Simpson's) dressing-room, Barlow slid behind him and sprinkled some cow-it in his stage-hat, and a moment later, Simpson stepped on the boards amid the most tumultuous applause.

Every one admired him.

Barlow stood at the flies to see the fun.

Simpson felt as big as if he were Whalley.

After he had proceeded a little way with the dialogue he commenced to perspire freely.

All this time he had held his hat in his hand, but, as luck would have it, just as his pores were fairly open, he had to put his tile on in order that he might make a gesture with both hands.

After the hat had been on his head a few minutes he felt a tickling sensation on the top of his head.

He didn't think much of it at first, but finally he considered it worthy of a scratch, and he bestowed a couple of digs on it.

Then it suddenly became more intense.

Barlow smiled.

He made another scrape at his head, and a boy up-stairs yelled :

"Hey, Simpson! what's der matter; got a bite?"

Then there was a long, loud laugh.

Even Juliet grinned.

Simpson was wild.

Every moment the cow-it was eating into him, and he rushed around like a maniac, howling for a curry-comb.

The audience was nonplused.

Nobody knew what to make of it—except Barlow.

Romeo literally howled :

"Oh, take me home, I'm stabbed!"

Some of the people believed him.

Some of the auditors rushed upon the stage, and Simpson was so wild and furious, and frothed at the mouth so much that a physician present said that it was his opinion that Simpson was roaring crazy.

So he ordered him to be tied.

Which was immediately done.

Being unable to scratch he bellowed and went on like a wild bull.

He was then put in a cart and taken home, and chained up in the wood-shed that he couldn't do any damage.

On the following day the doctor came around, and made a careful examination of his case, and found what was the matter.

Then he was unchained and set at liberty.

The cow-itch eat the hair right off his head, and now he's as bald as a soup tureen.

He is a Thespian no more.

At the next meeting of the amateur club he tendered his resignation, and swears he will never again wrestle with Romeo.

He is thirsting for the heart's blood of the person who played the trick on him, and when they come together, if they ever do, the eye-witness of the scene will think they are looking at a cross between Bedlam and a Chinese riot.

BLINKEY'S REVENGE.

BY L'HOMME QUI RIT.

BLINKEY, as he was familiarly called by his ragged companions, was sitting on one of the East River piers not long ago, trying to catch some flounders.

"Hey, Jakey!" he yelled to an angler near by, "did yer get a bite yet?"

"Yes, dis mornin' I got one," was the reply.

"What kind?" asked Blinkey.

"A spitz," said Jakey.

The conversation was changed by the appearance of a policeman.

"I wonder what dat peeler wants?" asked Jakey.

"Dunno," replied Blinkey.

"Come, get away from here, you infernal young loafers, or I'll take you in!"

"We ain't a-doin' nothin'," said Blinkey.

"You don't want to give me none of your chin music, said the representative of the finest police in the world, "or I'll club the head of ye, and take ye in. Come, get along now lively."

Blinkey and Jakey pulled up their lines, and started up the dock.

"Guess he thinks we're tryin' ter lay around ter hook somethin'," suggested Jakey.

"Now, then, jes' ye see here," said Blinkey, confidentially; "dat's a new cop, an' I'm jes' a-goin' ter get hunk wid him for drivin' us away."

"Hurry up, there!" bellowed the cop, who was walking behind them.

They hurried.

When they were up the street, Blinkey repeated his threat.

"What yer goin' ter do about it?" asked Jakey, impatiently; "are ye a-goin' ter get him broke?"

"Dunno 'bout dat, but I'm er goin' ter give him a racket, you bet!"

Just then they noticed the peeler going up a side street, and they returned to the dock and went on fishing.

They hadn't been enjoying themselves long before Blinkey saw the policeman returning.

"Cheese it, Jakey!" he said.

"What's up?"

"Here comes de cop."

"We'll be taken in, sure."

"Let's hide away," suggested Blinkey.

There were a number of empty liquor casks lying around, and, behind one of them the two dock rats hid themselves.

They thought the cop was coming down on purpose to scoop them in, but in this they were mistaken.

He was soon close to them.

"Oh, we're scooped, sure" murmured Jakey, tremblingly.

"Keep still, yer flat; do yer want ter give the thing away?" demanded Blinkey, as he peered around the cask and found out that they were unobserved.

"I guess we'll get six months on der Island," whined Jakey.

Then they saw the cop tip a cask from its head to its side.

After that he crawled into it and replaced the head so that he would not be seen, and laid down for a sleep.

In about ten minutes he was snoring the snores of the inebriated.

"How is dat for de finest pleece in der world?"

"What d'ye say?" roared Jakey.

"Now's de time ter give de bloody snoozer a racket," said Blinkey, joyously.

"How'll we get hunk wid him, anyhow?"

A bright thought struck Jakey.

"Let's go an' give him away at der station-house."

"Not much," said Blinkey; "dey wouldn't believe us for a cent."

"Den what'll we do?"

Blinkey scratched his uncombed head, and soon a smile shone through the dirt with which his face was plated.

He had the thing all planned in his mind.

The dock was an old, unused one, which was seldom frequented. A steamboat had landed here at one time, and there was a slanting place cut down the front of the pier on which to throw the gang-plank.

"Now, den, Jakey," said Blinkey, with a laugh, "jes' you gimme a lift, if yer want ter see a regular circus."

Jakey did as he was told, and they both commenced pushing the cask in which the drunken cop lay.

He was snoring away and did not know what was going on; getting the cask to where the slant commenced, they both gave it a terrible kick, and in another instant it shot off into the air and made a terrible splash as it struck the water.

The policeman was soon plunging madly for shore, and the two young Arabs gave him a most provoking laugh.

"Dat's it, ole alligator, strike out lively."

"Don't he look like a hippopotamus?" said Jakey.

They were going to tell the roundsman and have him given away, but, thinking that they had about squared things, they left him and went home.

"Dese new cops jes' think dere somebody, I tell yer, but dey gets everlastingly sucked in when dey comes foolin' around dis hairpin," said Blinkey, as he parted company with his pal for the night.

SQUARE WITH SIMPSON.

BY L'HOMME QUI RIT.

SIMPSON was desperate the other day.

He is often desperate, but this time he was clean-off his burner.

The way of it was this.

As he was going down the street, he bought a button-hole bouquet to present to his girl that evening.

While he held it in one hand, he turned his back to pay for it; and, while he was looking, Blinky sprinkled some red pepper on it.

Before putting it in his button-hole, he took a long smell of it.

He only took one smell—there was nothing piggish about him.

He sneezed and coughed, and tears ran from his eyes in profusion.

The first thing he did was to reach for Blinky, whom he caught and pounded.

"Take that, ye miserable, slab-sided son of a sea-cook!" muttered Simpson, as he let go of Blinky's collar.

"I'll get hunk wid ye fer dis; see 'f I don't," said Blinky big tears coursing down his face.

"What d'ye say?" roared Simpson, angrily.

Blinky didn't reply.

He thought it better to get out of the way.

Blinky knew all about Simpson and his girl, and that the former was not recognized by her old man.

He that knew Simpson, in order to see her, was compelled to scale the back fence from the vacant lots, and ascend to her window on a step-ladder.

"I guess I'll jes' give that rooster a bad send off dis night, or else my name ain't Blinky," mused that individual when he was out of Simpson's way.

Just as it got dusk the whole family where Simpson's girl lived sat down to dinner.

They dined in the front room.

There wasn't a soul in the back part of the house.

Blinky took advantage of this chance to accomplish his purpose.

And he did to his satisfaction.

He just scaled the back fence, *à la* Simpson, and ran up to the house.

He grasped the step-ladder in one hand and a saw in the other.

Then he selected a rung about half way to the top and sawed it almost through, leaving just enough unsawed to hold it in its place.

"I jes' guess der bloke'll get a fus-class tumble when he slaps his hoof down on dat," soliloquized Blinky.

Then he chuckled and hid away to see the fun.

In an hour or so he heard Simpson clambering up the fence, and he kept as still as he could.

Then the girl appeared at the window.

Simpson was soon under the window talking to her.

"You can come up, if you like," she said, "for the folks are all on the front stoop."

"All right," said Simpson.

Then he placed the ladder in position and commenced the ascent.

"Oh, golly!" ain't dis high old fun?" murmured Blinky to himself.

Simpson finally got half way up and stepped on the fatal rung.

There was a spasmodic shriek, and the air seemed to be densely impregnated with Simpson.

The girl didn't know what to make of it.

Simpson did not fall to the ground.

He landed on the top of the cistern cover, which, being rotten, went through and he went floundering into the water.

"How's dat fer high, eh? Guess yer won't put on no lugs wid me no more, will yer?"

Simpson couldn't reply, and Blinky got on the fence where he'd be safe in case the girl's father chased him.

The old man heard the noise, and was soon out in the yard.

The alarm was given, and crowds surged in off the sidewalk.

Simpson felt like a dog when the crowd came in.

It was a dead give away on him.

After awhile he was fished out, and the gang took a good, square laugh at him, much to the disgust of the girl.

Simpson was as red as a gin cocktail as the old man led him out by the ear and told him never to come around there again on pain of being massacred.

When he got on the sidewalk, Blinky gave him a wicked smile, and chuckled:

"Told yer I'd get hunk wid yer, an' I never goes back on my word; I carries a little hatchet in my boot, and don't yer give it akee."

Then the crowd roared, and Simpson sneaked off to some quiet spot, where he could undisturbed enjoy the manifold beauties of solitude.

[THE END.]

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